

John Caldwell Calhoun to Andrew Jackson, May 24, 1820, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

SECRETARY CALHOUN TO JACKSON.

Department of War, May 24, 1820.

Sir, During the late session of Congress an appropriation of \$20,000 was made to defray the expenses of holding a treaty for the extinguishment of Indian title to lands within the state of Mississippi, and the delegation in Congress from that state, have proposed that you and Genl. Thomas Hinds of Mississippi, be appointed the commissioners to hold the treaty.¹ The President is very desirous to employ you upon this duty, and it will afford him great satisfaction if it should be agreeable to you to accept of the appointment. I take pleasure in communicating his wishes upon the subject, and request the favor of an early answer.

¹ The Mississippi delegation in the House of Representatives had unanimously asked that Jackson be one of the commissioners (see Christopher Rankin to Jackson, Jackson MSS., May 16, 1820). This offer of the administration was accepted and a treaty was made with the Choctaws Oct. 18, 1820 (treaty of Doak's Stand), by which the Indians surrendered a tract of land east of the Mississippi lying between a point near Natchez and a point one mile below the mouth of the Arkansas River, on the opposite side of the Mississippi, bounded on the east by a line approximately seventy miles east of the Mississippi, and containing about 8,500 square miles of territory. In exchange, the United States ceded lands between the Arkansas and Red rivers, and made other provisions. This letter is printed, with the date May 23, in *Am. St. Pap., Ind. Aff.*, II. 230; journal of the negotiation, *ibid.*, II. 234–250.

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If it should suit you to accept the appointment, a commission will be immediately forwarded to you, as the first named commissioner, vesting you in conjunction with General Hinds, with full powers, to exercise your own judgment and discretion as to the time, place and manner of commencing and conducting the negotiation, of which he will be duly notified; and the choctaw agent will be instructed to prepare the chiefs to give you a friendly reception.

It is contemplated to place the whole appropriation at your disposal,² which is intended to cover all the expenses of the negotiation, (including the pay of the commrs. and of the Secretary, whom, should you agree to serve, you will be authorized to appoint,) except the sums that may be stipulated to be paid to the Indians in the treaty which shall be concluded with them.

² Calhoun's instructions to Jackson and Hinds, July 12, 1820, contain the following:

"Your compensation will be at the rate of \$8 per diem, and that of the Secretary to the commission, whom you are authorized to appoint, at the rate of \$5 per diem, for the time actually engaged. The payment will be made on your certificate of honor, specifying the time that you have been actually engaged. You will also certify the time that the Secretary may be actually engaged. Your certificate, in like manner, will be a necessary voucher for the presents distributed under your authority."

I have the honor to be,